

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 761

By Yarbro

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Carrie McLaughlin Gentry of Nashville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Carrie McLaughlin Gentry, a noted Civil Rights activist and local Democratic Party trailblazer; and

WHEREAS, Carrie Gentry was an exemplary public servant and fierce defender for all people who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born in Georgia, Carrie McLaughlin Gentry was one of fourteen children; after the early deaths of both of her parents, she was raised by her siblings and moved to Boston, where she attended Howard University and studied health physical education and dance; and

WHEREAS, she and her husband, Howard Gentry, Sr., moved to Tennessee in 1949 to work at what is today Tennessee State University (TSU); Mrs. Gentry was a faculty member who taught dance and served as director of the majorettes, while Coach Gentry was the university's athletic director; and

WHEREAS, during the Civil Rights Movement, Mrs. Gentry and her husband transported TSU students to First Baptist Church-Capitol Hill to be trained in nonviolence tactics in the church's basement with James Lawson and Reverend Kelly Miller Smith; they later transported students to participate in sit-in protests downtown and would pay bail money for those who were arrested and jailed; and

WHEREAS, Carrie Gentry and her longtime friend, Inez Crutchfield, became the first African Americans to serve on the Davidson County Democratic Party's Women's Club, and the

pair were the first and second African-American presidents of the organization, with Ms. Crutchfield serving in 1975 and Mrs. Gentry serving in 1978; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Gentry was honored to be inducted into TSU's Sports Hall of Fame, and she was a recipient of the 2019 Joe Kraft Humanitarian Award in recognition of her lifelong strength of character and unwavering integrity; and

WHEREAS, a devout woman of faith, Carrie Gentry attended First Baptist Church-Capitol Hill for many years and served the church in a number of capacities; and

WHEREAS, she was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Gentry was the proud mother of Carol Gentry (Alfonso) Johnson and Howard C. Gentry, Jr.; the devoted grandmother of Tracey Johnson, Andre P. (Tiffany) Johnson, Cristiana M. Gentry, Courtnei G. (Travis) Chenault, Taylor D. Gentry, and Ryan M. Gentry; and the treasured great-grandmother of Caymon, Christopher, Trey II, Cassidei, Cydnei, and Calei. She will be lovingly remembered by a host of extended family and dear friends; and

WHEREAS, Carrie Gentry was preceded in death by her husband of forty-seven years, Howard Cornelius Gentry, Sr.; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Gentry leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Carrie McLaughlin Gentry, reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mrs. Gentry.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.